
WHY VOTING KEEPS OUR COUNTRY STRONG



On February 3, 1870, as the Fifteenth Amendment was ratified, the long sought dream of African Americans to acquire the right to vote became a reality. On August 18, 1920, women were given the right to vote. Today, everyone over the age of eighteen has the right to vote. Why was voting so important to African Americans and women that they went through protest after protest just to be able to bubble circles on a piece of paper?

Voting is a silent dialect, a dialect in which a bubbled circle means much more than any spoken word. To vote means to take an active part in our country's traditions and customs. Voting means carrying out one's civic duty, and is the long-term contribution made towards preserving American democracy. Voting allows a relative mutual agreement to be reached among a myriad of points of view. It brings a country together and lets individuals make decisions as a country, instead of as individuals. Therefore, it can be concluded that with voting comes the expression of our collective will, which was what the colonists so long ago passionately desired and fought to achieve.

The right to vote is the cornerstone of our democracy, the linchpin of a government of the people, for the people, and by the people. The strength of our country lies in the vote. Without the right to vote, the voice of the people is lost. Our true strength is in our ability to express our divergent views through the polling booth.

Timothy C. Lee
John A. Rowland High School
Rowland Heights, California

Timothy is the winner of the Secretary of State's 2002 Essay Contest. Timothy's essay was selected from a field of essays that addressed the topic of why voting keeps our country strong.

